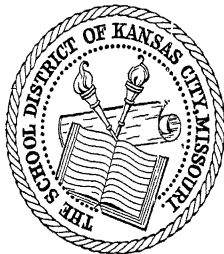


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SUGGESTIONS

By

JOHN COTTON DANA

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INTRODUCTION

I have been a librarian for over thirty years. In that time I have written much on the subject of libraries. This book is made up of extracts from what I have written; though some, short as they are, were written as complete essays. I reprint them because they seem to be as true now as when I wrote them, and because I seem not able to say the same things again in any better way, and because I believe that much of what is here included can help the beginner in library work to look at her calling with fresh interest.

Not all the extracts are very closely related to obvious aspects of work in a small library; but even those which seem most remote can help to make library work seem more important or at least more deserving of careful thought.

J. C. DANA

USEFUL REFERENCE SERIES

No. 24

SUGGESTIONS

The Library; its Books and its Public

I

ALL CAN JOIN IN PROMOTING A LIBRARY

The library is the one public institution which can serve as a center of pleasure and learning for all the city. To its service all can give their sympathy and aid without restraint of politics or creed, and without thought of difference in station or in culture. Recreation, good cheer, research, business, trade, government, social life, conduct, religion, all of these in every aspect can turn to books for help.

II

THE LIBRARY

We are for the first time in all history, building, in our public libraries, temples of happiness and wisdom common to all. No other institution which society has brought forth is so wide in its scope; so universal in its appeal; so near to every one of us; so inviting to both young and old; so fit to teach, without arrogance, the ignorant and, without faltering, the wisest.

III

THE LIBRARY BUILDING

A beautiful new library building is set down in one of our American cities. Consider what it may mean to that city as the years go by. By its mere presence it gives to every citizen a keener sense of the value and obligations of his citizenship. It strengthens that proper pride of place which does more to keep a city well built, clean, and well administered than all the laws and ordinances ever made. To the young, especially, it sets an example of municipal adornment and municipal housekeeping which makes them, as

they grow older, hostile critics of every public institution not as appropriately housed and as well ordered as is this.

IV

THE LIBRARY RIVALS THE HOME

Light, fresh air, adornment, neatness, refinement, hospitality, cheer—in all these things the library should rival the most attractive home in the town which owns it.

V

THE BEST IS NOT TOO GOOD FOR ANYBODY

What wise and experienced men call good in letters is not, some say, within the people's grasp. The people must be fetched with the cheap and silly. And the librarian replies that, for the poorest, dullest, and narrowest mind, the best in literature is none too good; that from the vast storehouse of printed things that make up our literary heritage can be brought forth writings, good, high, true, and welcome to the unlearned. If that is not so, then much of our boasting of our literary possessions is vain.

VI

LET THE LIBRARY PLEASE, NOT PREACH

Work for the extension of the public library from the starting point of sympathy; from the universal desire for an increase of human happiness by an increase of knowledge of the conditions of human happiness; not from the starting point of law, of compulsion, of enforcing on others our views of their duty.

VII

THE ALTARS TO LEARNING

Cities and towns are now for the first time erecting altars to the gods of good fellowship, joy, and learning. These altars are our public libraries.

VIII

BUILDING AN ENCYCLOPÆDIA

A librarian should try to get for his community all the best presentations of all facts and theories whatsoever, and all fairly accredited imaginative portrayals

of life ; but should check his efforts by a skilful anticipation of what his community will quietly accept.

The community wants a complete, well-rounded encyclopædia library. The librarian is in duty bound to try to get it.

IX

A LIBRARY

It is not an office, or a store, or a factory; it is the chosen home of the good and wise men who wrote its books; it is constituted and maintained to help our fellows to find life easier and brighter and more worth the living; it speaks at once to every comer of all these things.

X

THE CITY FIRESIDE

As the library helps to draw citizens together in the pursuits of the delights of literature, art, and science and in the study of social and municipal problems; like a skilled hostess, it gathers kindred spirits into groups; inspires all to their best work; makes a city seem more like a home; and at length becomes to all as it were a civic hearthstone, a municipal fireside.

XI

THE LIBRARY IS NOT A BUSINESS OFFICE

It is a center of public happiness first, of public education next.

XII

THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE

A library is a tree of knowledge, which bears the more abundantly the more we gather and enjoy its fruits.

XIII

THE WISEST TEACHER

There is only one solution of all social problems—increase of intelligence and sympathy. To this end newspapers, schools, and pulpits are useful. But these are all limited in their speech. Politics, personal considerations, undue or misplaced conservatism—these

make limitations.—The public library is the broadest of teachers, one may say the only free teacher. It is the most liberal of schools; it is the only real people's college. It can freely tell all known facts about any question. It begins with the youngest, and when a man is old it is still ready and able to instruct him. It answers fairly all who want to know. It leads us to want to know. Among the things which continually make for happiness, order, and prosperity in the community count the public library as one.

XIV

EVERYBODY'S BOOKS

The people like best the library which they themselves build for themselves and manage for themselves; such a library is the best free school for old and young, learned and learners; all can appeal to it; and it will answer all, please all, and mislead none.

XV

THE PUBLIC OWNS ITS PUBLIC LIBRARY

This fact sheds much light on the question of public library management. It means that the public library must be fitted to public needs. It must suit its community. It must do the maximum work at the minimum of expense. It must be open to its public; it must attract its public; it must please its public; all to the end that it may educate its public.

XVI

THE WISEST OF ALL IS THE LIBRARY

The librarian says: "Here is the diary of humanity, the autobiography of man, the record of all that he has done, of all his imaginings, of all his experiments, lacking which civilization would pass in a day, and here is the wisdom which, applied but for one day, would change our imperfect society into one better than we can fashion out of dreams. And all this is set down in skilfully chosen words, cunningly put together, by the wisest and the wittiest and the most human of our forebears."

XVII

THE CHANGING FIELD OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

The legitimate field of work of a city's public library is, that field which the temper of that city may at any given time permit it, or encourage it, or compel it to occupy. As that temper changes, the field will change accordingly; narrowing and widening and using broad or intensive cultivation as days pass and knowledges, thoughts and feelings vary. The field actually occupied by a library on any given day can be roughly described—for that day. The field it will occupy to-morrow, and the field it ought to occupy to-morrow—this latter being what may be called its legitimate field—neither of these can be delimited.

XVIII

VARIATIONS IN LIBRARY WORK

What is the work in a city which its library ought to do? No man knows. Those in charge of libraries are always on the search for things that seem to need to be done; when they find such they look into them, and then ask themselves if the best use of the plant and income which their fellows have placed in their hands as a trust, includes doing these things. If they think it does, they take them on; but are always ready,—if they are wise—to turn them over to other workers, public or private, who are better fitted to do them, as soon as such are found.

XIX

TO THE TAX-PAYER, ON HIS LIBRARY

If you will think of your public library as a Dictionary and Encyclopædia—and you would be quite right in so thinking of it—and then if you will believe me when I say that it is a Dictionary and Encyclopædia about one thousand times larger, infinitely more complete and accurate and vastly wider in its range of contents than are Webster's and the Britannica combined, you will begin to get a faint idea of why you feel, as I am sure you do, that your library is a very

great and useful thing, much to be respected for its size and richness, and very powerful in its chosen line of telling you what you wish to know. And then, if you will think of the public library as yours,—as properly yours as is the dictionary on your own shelf at home; and then if you will keep always in mind, as you should these facts: that this, your Dictionary and Encyclopædia of all that the world now knows or ever knew, of all that it does and ever did, of all that it ever discovered, or invented, or taught or said or sung, is made apt to your hand and ready to your wish by a group of servitors who are much more eager to make your library serve you well than they are to get the modest wage you pay them, then you will see clearly why this part, the library, of the educational system of your town, has far more power to be of help to you and yours, to your welfare and your business, than its very modest annual cost at first suggests.

XX

BOOKS

Books are the winged seeds of the tree of knowledge.

XXI

CHURCH AND LIBRARY

It is a pity that the church and the library, both being foster mothers of learning, wisdom and right living, do not work together more closely for the attainment of their common aims.

Religion divides men; and the churches, dedicated to solemn uses, have not the power to unite us all about the hearthstone of our common interests. The library may touch the life of all, may stir all intellects and warm all hearts.

The Library's Influence

XXII

THE LIBRARIAN'S NEW QUESTION

The question once was, "What can a library be?" To-day the question is, "What can a library do?" Formerly it was a question of resources, of number of books, of wealth of material. Now it is rather a question of effectiveness, of influence on the community. And this is not a case of two sides of the same shield. The multiplication of books is one thing; the bringing together of a library and its community is another and a different thing.

XXIII

THE LIBRARY AS AN ACTIVE PERSONALITY

Some are born bright; some have education thrust upon them; and some know little and think that enough. The first will find the books they need somewhere anyway; the second don't have to go to the library for any but the rare books; the third are the people we have pinned our fate to; if they don't know they must be made to know,—and how shall the library do its part in making for them the opportunity for knowledge both handy and inviting? Must it be popular, literally; or stand a little on its dignity? Should it go to Mahomet, or wait for Mahomet to come?

XXIV

THE LIBRARY'S WORK

The friends of the modern public library say of it, that it brightens and deepens life; stimulates and helps the teacher; attracts the children to the companionship of the merry, the wise and the ennobling; leads the thoughtless to think, and those who think to have more purpose in their thinking; is a school for those who were denied schooling or have passed its formal limit; helps to brighten the day's toil for the humble workman; encourages the artisan to better his product; keeps the artist keyed up to his best; and in fact does

all the things that a company of the wisest, wittiest, and best of the men and women of all the world and of all time can do for the community which has brought together their best thoughts in printed pages.

XXV

HOW LIBRARIES FEEL

Libraries are pleasant places. Their shelves do not lament under the wisdom they carry; they rather delight in their burdens. Their books are, like our companions, grave or gay, as nature made them. And one may believe that the great men, our fellows, who made the best of these books, rejoice mightily when words of theirs add to the happiness of any.

XXVI

THE LIBRARY HELPS TO WIDE VIEWS

Justice has her seat in the courts of law; but she is blind and stern, and could never act as a gracious hostess. The library adds to justice sentiment, and aims to temper conduct by a charity born of the widest view.

XXVII

THE LIBRARY AS A LEVELER

Many still do not see how unique a thing a public library is. It is the most democratic, universal institution ever devised. It is by all, for all. It is to be used as each and every one may choose. It draws no line of politics, wealth, birth, or education. All can learn here, without rules and choose their own teachers. A collection of good books, and people to use them; what a university is this! Nothing that is human is foreign to it. It has, it is, the beginning of every study and of every human interest, from Greek philosophy to paving, from statecraft to dress.

XXVIII

A LIBRARY AND ITS WORK

Get good books; give them a home attractive to readers of good books; name a friend of good books as mistress of this home, and you have a Library; all share in its support and all get pleasure and profit

from it if they will. Without divisions—religious, political or social—it unites all in the pursuit of high pleasure and sound learning, and gives to those who support it that common interest which is the basis of proper local pride.

XXIX

THE MODERN PUBLIC LIBRARY

It is the helpful friend of scientific, art, and historical societies; of educational and labor organizations; of city improvement organizations; of teachers' clubs and parents' societies and women's clubs. At the library should be books and journals to which all these institutions must come for their guidance or material. Here should be rooms suitable for their gatherings. Here should be a spirit hospitable to them all; knowing what is in books; but keenly alive also to all that is best, all that is striving for helpful expression in the people who own those books and hope much from them.

XXX

INTELLECTUAL LIFE AND FREE LIBRARIES

I was asked this question: "What is the intellectual life of a city, and what is the relation of a free library to it?"

"The intellectual life of a city is chiefly that which expresses itself in a fair and wholesome accomplishment of large results. It may be the making of good shoes by workers who are fairly paid and labor under wholesome conditions. It may be the furnishing of honest gas at a fair price to all who desire it. It may be the writing of a good pamphlet on a new banking system, or the managing of the police department to the greater comfort and welfare of all concerned. The Free Library's relation to this Intellectual Life is that of a quasi-living storehouse of such material as will add to its effectiveness."

XXXI

SPEECH, WORDS, WRITING, PRINTING, LIBRARIES

Speech, words, writing and printing having been invented and, all being at their appointed tasks, man devised the library. In it he gathered all that men had learned and thought, that thereby the new man might be helped to gather more. Through the library, also, man made opinion free, neither binding it nor concealing it. And through the library, once more, man invited all men to seek wisdom and to learn how to become good citizens.

The Librarian

XXXII

THE LIBRARIAN

It is not the building, however ornate it may be; or the books on the shelves, even though they are many, costly, and most expertly cataloged; or the trustees, even though they are bookish, politic, and deeply conscious of their responsibilities as public officials—it is not these that make a library, but the librarian.

A collection of books gathered at public expense does not justify itself by the simple fact that it is.

XXXIII

THE LIBRARIAN MAKES THE LIBRARY

If a library be not a live educational institution it were better never established. It is ours to justify to the world the literary ware-house. A library is good only as the librarian makes it so.

XXXIV

HOW LIBRARIANS BECAME IMPORTANT

The growth of print has increased the reading habit. This increase has helped to make collections of print seem more useful. Thus the work of skilled librarians has become more important. From these facts we conclude that librarians have not made libraries; but that many and varied circumstances have brought us libraries, and these have made the librarians.

XXXV

THE LIBRARIAN IS PUZZLED

All civilized mankind is still rather the sport of the printing press than its master; and it is not strange that keepers of books should find themselves puzzled over their duties instead of satisfied with their accomplishments.

XXXVI

THE LIBRARIAN SAYS:

Here is the diary of humanity, the autobiography of man, the record of all that he has done, of all his imaginings, of all his experiments—failure and success alike. Here is the knowledge, lacking which civilization would pass in a day, and here the wisdom which, applied but for one day, would change our imperfect society into one better than we can fashion out of dreams. And all this is set down in skilfully chosen words, cunningly put together, by the wisest and the wittiest and the most human of our forbears.

XXXVII

THE LIBRARIAN'S GOOD DAY

With all knowledge for her province, with old and young of every kind and of every trade and calling in her community for her field of work, and with the promotion of happiness for her aim, the librarian takes up her daily task each morning with enthusiasm and lays it down each night with regret.

XXXVIII

THE FRIEND OF MAN

If the librarian of a country village can see her little collection of books, under her clever rule, subtly fitted to its owners, wisely meeting the needs its own active presence arouses, make this one and that one, old or young, here and there, see more things, know of more things, care for more things, take the broader view, loose the bonds of bigotry, open the eyes of charity, teach "of course" to wait on "perhaps," change self-satisfaction to ambition, and add sparkle to the daily grind—then, is she not a friend of society and of some good in the world?

XXXIX

THE ANCIENT EARMARKS

The marks of the days when books were few and costly, when scholars only used them and scholars only kept them, and when scholars were all men of me-

diæval learning, these marks are still plain on our libraries. It would be interesting to trace some of the peculiarities which mark our methods off—too much, perhaps—from the ways of doing things in other fields, back to the ecclesiastical, monkish, university, learned, scholastic, exclusive, privileged days of the modern library's early history. It is easy for librarians to follow precedents too well.

XL

ON USING BOOKS AS TOOLS

Books are tools, of which here and there one is useful for a certain purpose to a certain person. The farmer consults his farm paper on the mixing of pig-feed; the cook takes from the latest treatise the rules for a new salad; the chemist finds in his journals the last word in the detection of poisons; the man of affairs turns to the last market reports for guidance in his day's transactions; and all have used books, have studied literature. The hammer and the hoe, the plow and the dictionary, the engine and the encyclopædia, the trowel and the treatise on philosophy—these are tools. They are proper for man's service, not man for theirs.

XLI

TO LIVE MUCH IF NOT LONG

To live much if not long, we must gain acquaintance with the best of things that are being and have been said and the notable things that are being and have been done. Without this a man lives only a small part of his life. With it he lives a round of years in a single day.

XLII

DOUBT YOUR SENSATIONS

Faith in one's senses is a very father of lies. To observe accurately, to read exactly is impossible for any but the trained specialist, and save within narrow limits it is impossible for him.

XLIII

OUR OWN GREAT OLD BOOKS DO NOT STAND ALONE

What Darwin lays down as the foundation of social order, sympathy, has, for indispensable elements, community of interest and likeness in knowledge. We hope for the federation of the world. In preparation for it each race must regard less exclusively its own past and acquaint itself more freely and more willingly with the religious and social legacies of other races. So our great books will lose their uniqueness, because other great books of other great peoples will stand beside them as their equals.

XLIV

SOME OLD BOOKS ARE GREAT, MOST ARE SIMPLY OLD

There are great books, old books, which are broad, universal, enduring, because they give us the penetrating view of life of the man of genius, of the seer, the poet, the native-born psychologist. There are others which have gathered greatness with the lapse of time, because a fashion of scholarship, the dictates of a religion, the literary customs of a people, have led to their retention and have woven them, by quotation, paraphrase, and allusion, into the fabric of present literature. But these books are not many. A great part of those which are often counted as among them simply shine by a little borrowed light.

XLV

THE BOOK OF POWER

For every man the book of Power is the book that, first, gives him pleasure; next, informs him, next, sets him to thinking, and next, sets him to doing.

XLVI

THE WORTH OF A BOOK IS IN ITS USE

A public library is a collection of printed things used to delight and inform its owners.

Libraries in Schools

XLVII

LIBRARIES IN SCHOOLS

The libraries are established that they may gather the best of the fruits of the tree of human speech, spread them before men in all liberality and invite all to enjoy them. Schools are in part established that they may tell the young how to enjoy this feast. The day will come when all the schoolrooms in the land will be branches of great central libraries.

XLVIII

THE HABIT OF READING

After the teacher has taught the child the elements of reading, has trained him up to follow surely though slowly a simple narrative her next object should be, not to teach him what to read, for usually she does not know just what is best for a given pupil; but to give him a liking for the practice of reading, which is the same as training him to the habit of reading. The Reading Habit is the one thing needful to make us a nation of users of print, and the greatest users of print, that is, of the world's accumulated wisdom, will win in the long run.

XLIX

AS A MAN IS BORN, SO IS HE

Men are born each with a certain number of brain cells—and never get any more. Idiot children never grow up into savants; South African pickaninies can't be trained into Sir Isaac Newtons. Men are born brilliant, witty, hopeful, pessimistic, narrow, long-sighted, subordinate, leaders, and loving or hating responsibility, and no training can give them characteristics other than those with which they are born.

No educational system can do more than help to de-

velop the talent with which a child is born. It can't make the dull bright, the careless careful, the indifferent zealous, the inattentive attentive.

L

STUDY, STUDENTS AND TEACHERS, ETC.

We have education at its best when we eliminate the teacher,—and the library does! You can have one student and another student with him, and groups of students and students by the scores and the thousands; but, the moment one of them steps out of the student world and into the teacher's world, the student's spirit is handicapped and love of learning is diluted with egotism of teaching. In the long run he learns most who studies much and is taught little.

LI

BEWARE OF TEACHERS

We are in danger of being overtaught. We are always in danger of submitting too much to authority. There is a growing tendency in this country, as in others, to unify all systems of education; so far to unify them that the child shall be, from the beginning to the very end of his school life, though he graduates from university or technical school, in the hands of people of one mind and one thought as regards what constitutes education, and what are the proper and axiomatic views on all questions!

LII

WHERE A READER'S GUIDE IS MUCH NEEDED

The school people begin to realize that it is more important to give to the young instruction about that reading of newspapers and periodicals which they will actually do in daily life, than about "literature" usually so called; literature with which the average child will, when grown up, have nothing whatever to do. That is, the schools will more and more concern themselves with the things that are written and printed from day to day.

LIII

THE LIBRARY'S GUESTS

Of the school the essence is discipline. Here are the teachers and the taught, the ruler and the ruled. In the library all are learners side by side, guests at a banquet which all may enjoy because all have contributed to it.

LIV

THE PHONOGRAPHIC STORY TELLER

If stories are told to children in the library millenium they will be told by a phonograph, and the phonograph will be a block away from the library. For while the newspapers will take much of our work away, enough will remain, within a very manifestly bookish field, to leave no time to take up the tasks of the family fireside or the kindergarten. Moreover, we can easily make too much of the dear old stories. Like our patriotism, our religion, our ideals, our friendships, and our loves, they are not for analyzing and flaunting, but for quiet absorption.

To Readers

LV TO READERS

- 1 Reading pays.
- 2 Wise reading pays best.
- 3 Wise reading is guided reading of good things.
- 4 Libraries are established to collect good reading and guide in its use.
- 5 This Library of yours has many useful Guides and Lists and Study Courses, and Books that tell about Books on every subject,—what are the best and why. We wish these Guide Books to Reading were more used.

LVI WHY PRINTING INCREASES

The horizon of every man is wider than it was twenty years ago; he wants to know more about things; the schools turn out more readers than ever before; every street car invites to practice in reading; every vacant lot bears on its awful front a child's first reader, and on every wayside fence from here to the Pacific is a better reading lesson than our great grand-sires found in the horn-books they treasured with such care.

LVII WORDS AND READING

Words underlie our whole life; are the signs of our nobility and a cause thereof; are the bonds of society, the records of our progress and the steps on which we rise.

We live in words; thro' them, if we have a large store of them, our life is compact of meaning and full of delights.

LVIII
PROMOTE READING

To be informed is not the same as to be wise, but certainly it is a step away from ignorance.

LIX
READING IS OFTEN BETTER THAN HEARING

We are too much subject to the hypnotic influence of the oratorical voice. It is listening that has done the world so much harm, not talking.

LX
KEEP ON READING

To know life, to feel life, to know our fellows, we must have met the kings among men in the words in which they have set themselves before us. The old things that belong to our race, the gods, the heroes, the scenes, the deeds, the fancies of our fathers' fathers, all these we must have taken up into ourselves before life can have for us that fullness we desire. In a word, we must read.

LXI
THE DOCTOR OF THINGS TO READ

The average man will perhaps continue to select his own newspaper without asking advice on the subject; but in the department of books, and to some extent in the department of periodical literature outside of newspapers, he will, in days to come, naturally consult an expert before he does other than the most casual of reading, just as he now does before he takes other medicine than the commonest remedies. The Doctor of Things to Read, the Professor of Books, has long been on the way and is now almost here.

LXII
WHY READERS INCREASE

For nearly a hundred years we have held to and tried to put into practice, the doctrine that every child must be taught to read at public expense. Thus we have given to millions the reading power, and to most

of the millions a touch of the reading habit. Upon this nation-wide ability to read, the newspapers have built their astounding empire. Even the meanest of these newspapers has helped to spread the habit of reading and thereby to increase the total of our reading skill. In no country in the world has the Little School Master of printer's ink been so constant in his teaching as he has in America.

Novels

LXIII

PRAISE OF NOVELS

If printing was a happy thought and books are not a curse, then novels must be praised. They belong, with the dramas and the poems, among the good things which make our heritage; which unite men by community of thought and feeling; which make it a joy to have the art of reading; and give us simple pleasures, strong emotions, knowledge of our fellows, and sympathy with all mankind.

One may live well and be happy and read no stories; but most are wiser, happier, and worth more to their fellows for the novels they have read.

LXIV

KEEP ON LENDING NOVELS

If anything is to stay the narrowing and hardening process which specialization of learning, specialization of inquiry and of industry, and swift accumulation of wealth are setting up among us, it is a return to romance, poetry, imagination, fancy, and the general culture we are now being taught to despise. Of all these the novel is a part; rather, in the novel are all of these.

LXV

NOVELS WILL BE USED

The public's free public library will recognize at last the public's demand for the novel; will not attempt to excuse it, to hide it, to make light of it; but will make use of it as an educational force in itself, and as a point of departure to more serious things.

LXVI

DON'T SKIM NOVELS, READ THEM

Some people skim novels, skip through them, catch the story and nothing more. A novel, a novel worth looking at, is the last book in the world to be skipped.

Outside of fiction, of which poetry is a part, few, very few, books are to be read through. They are the tools of learning and are to be used as lovingly or as brutally as one may please. But if when you read a novel you simply grab at the "story," as a hunter sometimes kills his game merely for horns and hide, why go further than the murder and divorce columns in the morning paper? You might as well read the common run of histories with their inconsequential gossip, as read a noble story simply for the tale.

LXVII

SOME READERS ARE THIN AS WELL AS SOME BOOKS

Sap-heads and sillies, weak-minded boys and over-romantic girls read many books to no results whatever. But they are not thin-minded because they have read reams of thin stuff. They read reams of thin stuff because their minds are thin. They would have been no better for not reading; and often would have been worse.

LXVIII

OF KNOWLEDGE OF EVIL

I wonder if publicity of scandals promotes wickedness? Vice stalks at large through a thousand pages of the public press each day. I wonder if thereby vice grows in favor? Probably more crimes are read every day in America by more people than in any other country in the world. I wonder if we are more vicious than others? I doubt it. At any rate it waits to be proved. Of viceful novels the same things are true. We read them—and our social fabric still hangs together. As a public institution we must lend an ear to Mrs. Grundy. I would it were a deaf one! But with fiction, the question is not so much, does it square with our notions of purity, as, has it strength? Is it alive? Is it true? Does it say something? Is it from the brain of a prophet, a poet, a diviner of things? The canting twaddler, his are the books we can dispense with.

Advertising

LXIX

THE LIBRARY'S ATMOSPHERE

Of all possible advertising, the best, perhaps, is a cheerful and accomodating atmosphere in the library itself. Librarian and assistants are always prone to affect the official air the moment they become guardians of public property and fountains of information. They condescend, they patronize, they correct, and they shake rules and by-laws and red tape in the timid inquirer's face. This toplofty, bureaucratic spirit should be avoided by all means. Treat boy and girl, man and woman, ignorant and learned, gracious and rude, with uniform good temper, without condescension, never pertly. Anticipate all inquiries when possible, and especially put the shrinking and embarrassed visitor at ease.

LXX

ADVERTISING

If a library has or is a good thing for the community, let it be so said, early, late, and often, in large plain type. So doing shall the library's books enter, before too old to be of service, into that state of utter worn-out-ness which is the only known book heaven.

Too much cannot be said about the value to library progress of discreet and dignified publicity; publicity which impresses our fellows with a sense of the value of libraries to their communities; and show how easy it is for any community to establish a library and support it.

The Librarian as Censor

LXXI

THE LIBRARIAN IS A CENSOR

The librarian of a public library is a censor of books and reading. Of the millions of books already in the world, and of the thousands of new ones published each year, he can buy only a few. Those he buys he approves of as the better ones for his community to own and read. All the others he disapproves of, for the time being; that is, he exercises his power of censorship against them.

I do not say that the librarian rejects books of which he does not personally approve, or selects books which uphold his personal doctrines. The censorship which is the outcome of the usurped power to use a community's money to promote his own personal views is entirely reprehensible, no matter how "moral," "loyal," "religious," "constitutionally sound," "patriotic," or "acceptable to the majority" may be the opinions or theories the librarian may hold and try, by skilful selection of books, to promote.

LXXII

AMERICANIZING

We can, with the teachers' help, familiarize the children with some of those things which are the common heritage of our race, the old-time things in history, literature, myth, religion, and conduct, which, being held by us in common, bind us together, give us a national spirit, and make of us a people with a soul.

LXXIII

A SLOW PROCESS

There are many plans for improving the government of cities; the best is that which simply asks that the

city's citizens be educated. Referendum, initiative, recall, charter revision, commission government, new laws, civic leagues, reform movements and all the many other plans for making our cities more wisely and more honestly governed, and therefore cleaner, more healthful, more beautiful, and more desirable for business and more attractive as homes—these may help a little, temporarily, here and there; but genuine and permanent improvement can come only through improvement in the character and intelligence of the citizens. Golden conduct cannot come from leaden instincts, says the philosopher, and the wayfaring man sees that the philosopher is right.

The educational process is slow. A city's educational work can be as good as the people of the city wish it to be, and no better; and the people of a city can wish only for that kind of education and will demand only that kind and will tolerate only that kind which conforms to their own outlook, ability and prejudice. The stream cannot rise above its fountain; and the education of a city like the government of a city is just what the ability of its people entitles them to. The elders having but little wisdom can pass on but little to the next generation.

LXXIV

THE REAL CIVICS

If civil government is to be taught—and that young people should be given a little insight into its mysteries no one denies—it should be taught for what it is, not for what the books say it is, or what the good intentions of our fathers designed it to be. We have the form of democracy; and constitutions, statutes and charters and the like as they are printed give us the appearance of running things by the cool formation and the open expression of opinion and the fair show of hands. As a matter of fact, politics is what runs things, and politics is as like the civics of the schools as black is like white.

LXXV
CITIZENSHIP

No child will grow to care for his state because he is bidden so to do, or will love a flag because he has made a thousand salaams before it.

LXXVI
THE BEST PATRIOTISM

The helpful kind of patriotism is the kind that grows out of a knowledge of one's town, of her growth, her people, her property, her government, and her needs. This knowledge develops, first, an intelligent interest; then, a sympathy; then, a reasonable affection, a wise and temperate jealousy for her good name and a wish that she may prosper and grow more beautiful; and, finally, a desire to help her to become greater and finer, a bright and clean workshop and a home for the best of men and women.

LXXVII
THE LIBRARY SHOULD TELL OF THE LIFE OF
ITS OWN TOWN

To the making of the good citizen go two fundamentals, intelligence and sympathy. The intelligence should be as broad and deep as each individual's capacity and opportunity permit him to make it. It may cover as many other subjects of every conceivable kind as the taste and circumstances of each individual may dictate; one subject it must cover if it is to be of service in making of its possessors good citizens, and that subject is the citizens' own village, town, or city, his own county and his own state. Without such knowledge one cannot even cast his ballot intelligently once each year, and, what is of vastly more importance, cannot so conduct himself, hour by hour and day by day the whole year through, as to make his life helpful to his fellows.

LXXVIII
COOPERATION

To work with your fellows to a common-end—this is to be civilized, to be moral, to be efficient. This makes nations possible and promises the parliament of the world.

LXXIX
HOW TO RUN A COMMUNITY: WHO KNOWS?

The fact is that the world knows how to run a community in the best possible way. The world knows it, but no one man knows it and no one community knows it. I mean that somewhere in this or other lands, some mayor, fire or police commissioner, health officer, school supervisor or what not is running his particular department better than it was ever run before; more easily, more cheaply, more agreeably to the public.

Here is where the library comes in. In books, journals and reports, that is, in print, are to be found all of these best ideas; and if you wish to find them, to print you must go.

Now it is a library's business to take care of all that's in print, to store it and index it and so fix it that it will yield up to the inquirer all that it contains.

In print somewhere are nearly all the secrets of good city management. Therefore, if you would know how your city should be managed you must call on the library.

LXXX
A CREED FOR GOOD CITIZENS

I wish to be kind, just, intelligent, diligent and happy and the persuade others to help me so to be; because I know that in so far as I succeed I shall help my country to be generous, lawabiding, prosperous and progressive; a country in which everyone may find so much pleasure as his own nature permits him to earn and to enjoy.

If my country does wrong, I shall oppose it in that

wrong. If any try to injure it, I shall oppose them and if need I shall fight them.

I believe that we are and should continue united in the task of making everyone each day more nearly equal before our laws, our customs and our opinions and in giving to everyone every day greater freedom in thought and speech and action; all to the end that all may work together in harmony and in mutual aid to make this still more a desirable dwelling place for a gentle, intelligent and industrious people.

Trustees

LXXXI

GUARDIANS ONLY

Active and interested trustees can help to make the library's growing collection of books more valuable and more useful to the community than it would be without their labor. But in most cases the selection of books by trustees is a harmful interference with the librarian's proper work. If the librarian is so ignorant that he cannot select books wisely, then he is so ignorant that he cannot be a good librarian, and the trustees do wrong in keeping him.

LXXXII

SILENT PARTNERS

Trustees are appointed to see to it that their community's library is as good as funds available can make it. They are not appointed to do a librarian's work. Their duty is to make sure that the library is properly managed; not to manage it themselves.

Library Organization

LXXXIII

AN ORGANIZATION IS NOT AN END

If a good organization is the work of your hands, do not think it is useful unless it does something. We can't conquer the public with our "clubs." Never let your association hamper its strongest members.

Democracy is the apotheosis of mediocrity. If the many would advance they must look to the leaders to guide them. In union is strength; but the worth of strength is in its use. An association tends to be academic and to hold its members to a standard.

LXXXIV

THE SINS OF LIBRARY ASSOCIATIONS

Their special sins are many: for one, they make their meetings too long. In their zeal to make many good points they fail of one. They parade their fluent speakers until their meetings become little more than one voice crying in a wilderness of inattentive ears. They do not give the timid a chance; rather, they don't compel the shy to take up their burdens and talk. They do not cultivate the art of provoking and guiding discussion. They look for a crop of spontaneous ideas in a soil which does not grow them.

LXXXV

OF LARGE LIBRARY ASSOCIATIONS

Library associations of large membership are usually easy to form, are often given to sounding brass and tinkling cymbals, are sometimes dying and quite unmindful of the fact, and are never as effective as opportunity permits. They are often too conservative. They think it is their wisdom which restrains them, while in fact it is simply their mediocrity. They rise no higher than their average. They repress the ag-

gressive and the original. They fear they may do something improper, and, clothed in perfect propriety, before they are aware of it they reach a Nirvana of futility.

LXXXVI

A PLEA FOR ASSOCIATIONS AND JOINERS

Of formal associations of persons having interests in common the first thing to be said is that they effect much by the mere fact that they are! They do much of which we are vaguely conscious; they give to many that subtle feeling of comradeship which becomes, before one knows it, a stimulus to further effort and a guidance to that effort's profitable expense. One may well say, then, that the best work of an association is the association itself.

LXXXVII

ON ORGANIZATION

We wish to learn from one another and to call forth, from the public, criticisms and suggestions. The newspapers like to help us to do these things. They can be led to help us by one person. They can be led to help us more by three or four persons acting together. They can be led to help us most by an organization with a name, an object, officers, meetings and reports. This is sound theory. It has worked well many times in practice.

Therefore, join library associations and work in and for them.

Libraries and Business

LXXXIII

WHY BUSINESS LIBRARIES? BECAUSE:—

Business civilizes the world. Kings, Emperors and Princes once made laws all to their own profit with little thought to others' loss.

Business asks for laws which are helpful alike to him who buys and him who sells.

Trade thrives only where all profit by her growth. If left unhindered by Tyrant, King, Parliament or Demagogue, she improves her own manners and customs and laws that she may be everywhere more welcome.

Therefore, as Business grows, the world civilizes herself; asks for peace; gives up race prejudice; ties people together with the bond of mutual profit; discovers and rewards talent; awards prizes to genius; marks the lazy and deceitful for failure in the long run, and gives to the industrious and fair dealing a sure reward. And, Business needs what Libraries can supply.

LXXXIX

HOW BUSINESS BOOKS CAME

Given our general character and our opportunities, and the printing press, this is what the prophetically minded could have foreseen a hundred years ago: The schools and universal ability to read; the readers, the printing press and cheap paper, and, therefore, the omnipresent newspapers; the newspapers, encouraging the reading habit, and a thirst for news, which only the practice of the reading art can satisfy, and therefore, more and more readers; industrial development among a migrant, resourceful and inquiring people in a land of unlimited resource, and, therefore, a habit

of competing in industry which called out for all that there was of power and knowledge of his special calling, and therefore, the special trade and technical journal; the further demand, by the leaders in competing industries and the superintendents, managers, foremen, and more ambitious workers, for well-digested summaries in book form of the best that the special trade and business journals had put forth, and, therefore, Books on Business.

XC

BOOKS IN INDUSTRIES

We have passed the day in which bookishness was thought to be a proper attribute of the "student" and professor only, and a hindrance rather than a help to the man of affairs. Where it used to be said of a man, "He is hard-headed," it is now said, "He reads!"

The modern industrial worker is a user of print; that is the outstanding fact which the present day flood of books in industry sets plainly before us. And daily the industrial worker reads more and more; and daily the habit of using print to his profit goes further down the line, from president and manager to superintendent, foreman, expert workman and day laborer.

XCI

THE LIBRARY FOR THE MAN OF AFFAIRS

Do the business men and the business women, the active people, those who feed us and clothe us and transport us, those who have brought about in the last few decades the great increase in creature comforts for everyone, do these business people take an active interest in your library? Do they care for you or for your opinion? If not, is it their fault? Is it that they are gross and dull and material and worldly; or is it that you, the wise librarian, know not yet how to bring your library's influence to bear on the life that now is? Our work is but begun so long as we are not in close touch with the man of affairs.

The Use of Print

XCII

LEARN HOW TO LEARN

The most valuable knowledge is knowledge ~~that~~ leads to all knowledge. You can't learn everything, so be wise and learn how to learn what you need to learn. All knowledge is in print, or will be to-morrow. To know how to find in books and journals just the information you need—that is to hold the eel of wisdom by the tail.

Your library has much that is helpful on the art of learning how to learn.

XCIII

USING PRINT

Literature, after all, is simply all that's printed. In print, is found the sum of the experience and observation of the whole race. Out of this print it is our business to draw such facts and suggestions as may aid us in our daily tasks.

XCIV

WHAT TO DO WITH PRINT

The proper view of all printed things is, that the stream thereof need not be anywhere completely stored behind the dykes and dams formed by the shelves of any library or of any group of libraries; but that from that stream, as it rushes by, expert observers should select what is pertinent each to his own constituency, to his own organization, to his own community, hold it as long as it continues to have value to those for whom he selects it, make it easily accessible by some simple process, and then let it go.

XCV

LIBRARIES AS INDEXES AND GUIDES

The library begins to see the need which the prodigious output of print calls forth. This need is for guidance through that output. That guidance means a broadening of the library's work on the side of the abstract, the digest, the list and the index. The library, as it has been developed in the past forty years, is well equipped in both knowledge and technique to make, to promote, to purchase, and to render available for all inquiries these keys to the maze of modern print,—the abstract and the index.

They are learning that it is more important that they be able to direct many inquirers to the sources they need, than it is that they be able to supply a few inquirers with the sources themselves.

Art

XCVI

ART EDUCATION ON TAP

The illustrated journals and magazines of the country are doing more for art than all our art schools and classes and clubs combined. The pictures in them are looked at mainly for the stories they tell. But little by little the consciousness grows that here is something more than the photographer's work; that this and the other picture are of value in and for themselves; that in a humble way the engraving or process reproduction brings to every door that indefinable something which the work of art possesses, to enjoy which is the finest of fine pleasures. The understanding of this is sadly slow in growth, but it is pleasing to watch the growth of the idea that there is a shorter and better road to appreciation of things artistic in the "taking up" of illustrated journals and magazines than in the saddling one's self with a course of lectures and "taking up" Art. One may speak with scores of weekly readers of papers and journals with pictures before finding one who responds feelingly to the suggestion that there is something well worth the seeing, aside from the stories carried by the illustrations. And a superior smile is the almost universal response to the suggestion that comic cartoons are worth the study of those who are separated by a thousand miles or so from the world's galleries of art. But it all tells.

XCVII

WHAT ART STUDY SHOULD GIVE US

Progress in art is not progress in knowledge of Madonnas and Corots—save in one narrow sense. Progress in art is growth in sensibility, growth in

power of appreciation, growth in capacity to get pleasant thoughts and feelings from the sight of things which surround us every day—the wayside flower, the waving grass, the tree naked to winter winds, the towering chimney, familiar utensils of our homes, the pictures of the popular journals, and a thousand other things. The best course in art would begin with a spear of grass or a branch from the nearest tree, not with Raphael's Sistine Madonna or Michael Angelo's David.

Random Reflections

XCVIII

HENCE THE STYLE OF THESE PARAGRAPHS

We love the positive assertion; we delight in dogma. The pleasing theory has no qualifications. The creed makes no conditions and wears seven league boots.

We all seek pleasure. To make tomorrow not less full of joy than to-day, and to keep from it some of to-day's pains and sorrows, this sums up our aims.

The oyster may find content in mud and high water, the cow in her cud and the shade of a tree. We of the great race of humankind have long thought it better worth our while to count time by interests, images, thoughts, emotions, than by vacations and holidays.

Do it yourself. After all, if you wish a certain specific thing done you must do it yourself. The crowd has the passing emotion, the one man brings tireless zeal.

XCIX

THE VALUE OF ADMITTED IGNORANCE

One ignorance alone is humble,—ignorance confessed. One only never arms itself with dogma, never hides behind the positive assertion, never curries favor with the multitude by assuring them that the things they wish are the things that are; never prates of eternal truths; never attracts a following by using words that carry nothing clearly to the intellect but, by reason of a thousand associations, simply stir the emotions and give a thrill which is taken for conviction. One ignorance only does not do these things,—the ignorance which is confessed.

C

OF OLD AGE: FIVE SAYINGS

To forget your birthday is to fool some; but not Father Time.

In growing old, don't forget to grow.

To try to overlook our years is to argue an unprofitable past.

After the Flower, the Fruit, and very good eating it is.

To-day is ours; to-morrow may be; it was just so, and not better, when we were young.

CI

WAR IN DAILY LIFE; BUT NOT IN LIBRARY

Attractive careers in the field of altruism (like work in libraries) are not open to every one. The world's work must be done. That it may be done well, these most competent must do it. That the most competent may do it, they must compete with the less competent, and must win the day. Here, then, are war, victory, defeat, and the spoils of conquest. Nature, red in tooth and claw, comes perforce into every factory and every market, and comes to stay. Sympathy softens the aspect of this strife and tempers the sufferings of the defeated. But the strife goes on; and neither legislative enactment nor public opinion, even though born of generous sentiments, can stop it; and, if they are carried beyond a certain point, they but forbid the supremacy of the most competent and work us harm. Business must be done; most must engage in business; therefore, most must do battle day by day.

CII

TASTE IS NATURE'S GIFT

We cannot make rules for pleasures, or regulate taste by laws. Tastes, pleasures, feelings, come by nature, and they come differently to every one. They do not come by reason and they do not change to order.

CIII

CIVILIZATION RESTS UPON THE PRINTER

When certain animals of a few million years ago learned to talk, they became men; when these men learned to write and read, they became civilized; when

they learned to print, they made their civilization secure. Were all who can read and write destroyed tomorrow, the next generation would in a few years learn anew all that civilization has to give, and would learn it from the books that printers have made. Truly, civilization rests upon the printers.

CIV

WITH A GIFT

Goodwill, Love, and Friendship, all are Beautiful; then let Gifts which are their Symbols be also Beautiful.

CV

OF CURRENT BOOK REVIEWS

If one reads with credulous mind the things said by most reviewers about most books one would feel that an Augustan age of letters comes round again with every rising sun.

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